AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-implemented method for assigning functions between participants in a communications arrangement comprising a plurality of participants, the method comprising the steps of:

assigning, to a first participant from the plurality of participants, one or more functions to be performed by the first participant;

prior to a failure of the first ~~participant,~~ participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant,

designating a second participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; ~~and~~

the first participant communicating with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and

in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,

assigning the one or more functions to the second participant.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising unassigning the one or more functions from the first participant.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, further comprising

prior to a failure of the second participant, designating a third participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and

in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,

assigning the one or more functions to the third participant, and

unassigning the one or more functions from the second participant.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between the plurality of participants.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein communications between the participants are made ~~on different frequencies over time.~~ using a frequency hopping sequence according to a frequency hopping protocol.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 5, wherein each participant from the plurality of participants communicates with other participants during a particular time range.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein each participant from the plurality of participants communicates with other participants during a particular time range.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the communications arrangement is a wireless communications arrangement and the plurality of participants is a plurality of ~~wireless~~ mobile devices.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a request from the first participant.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the first participant not communicating within a specified amount of time.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a failure of the first participant.

12. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the first participant being out of range of one or more other participants from the plurality of participants.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:

the first participant is a master participant,

the second participant is a slave participant prior to being assigned to perform the one or more functions, and

the second participant is an associate master participant after being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the second participant is designated by the first participant.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-implemented method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the second participant is designated by one or more other participants from the plurality of participants.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium carrying one or more sequences of one or more instructions for assigning functions between participants in a communications arrangement, the one or more sequences of one or more instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of:

assigning, to a first participant from the plurality of participants, one or more functions to be performed by the first participant;

prior to a failure of the first participant that prevents the first participant from performing any of the one or more functions assigned to the first participant,

designating a second participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; ~~and~~

the first participant communicating with the second participant to indicate that the second participant has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and

in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,

assigning the one or more functions to the second participant.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, further comprising one or more sequences of additional instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to unassign the one or more functions from the first participant.

18. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, further comprising one or more sequences of additional instructions which, when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to

prior to a failure of the second participant, designating a third participant from the plurality of participants to perform the one or more functions if any of one or more handoff criteria are satisfied; and

in response to any of the one or more handoff criteria being satisfied,

assigning the one or more functions to the third participant, and

unassigning the one or more functions from the second participant.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between the plurality of participants.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein communications between the participants are made ~~on different frequencies over time.~~ using a frequency hopping sequence according to a frequency hopping protocol.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 20, wherein each participant from the plurality of participants communicates with other participants during a particular time range.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein each participant from the plurality of participants communicates with other participants during a particular time range.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the communications arrangement is a wireless communications arrangement and the plurality of participants is a plurality of ~~wireless~~ mobile devices.

24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a request from the first participant.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the first participant not communicating within a specified amount of time.

26. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a failure of the first participant.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the first participant being out of range of one or more other participants from the plurality of participants.

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein:
the first participant is a master participant,

the second participant is a slave participant prior to being assigned to perform the one or more functions, and

the second participant is an associate master participant after being designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the second participant is designated by the first participant.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as recited in Claim 16, wherein the second participant is designated by one or more other participants from the plurality of participants.

31. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A communications device comprising:

an interface configured to receive data from a plurality of communications devices and to transmit data to other communications devices; and

a mechanism communicatively coupled to the interface and configured to:

perform one or more functions, and

prior to a failure of the communications ~~device,~~ device that prevents the communications device from performing any of the one or more functions,

designate a particular communications device from the plurality of communications devices to perform the one or more functions if any of a set of handover criteria are ~~satisfied.~~ satisfied; and

the communications device communicating with the particular communications device to indicate that the particular communications device has been designated to perform the one or more functions if any of the one or more handoff criteria are satisfied.

32. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more functions include initiating and controlling communications between the plurality of communications devices.

33. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the communications device is a wireless communications device and the plurality of communications device is a plurality of ~~wireless~~ mobile communications devices.

34. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a request from the communications device.

35. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include a failure of the communications device.

36. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the communications device not communicating within a specified period of time.

37. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more handoff criteria include the communications device being out of range of one or more of the plurality of communications devices.

38. (ORIGINAL) The communications device as recited in Claim 31, wherein:
the communications device is a master participant, and
the particular communications device is an associate master participant.